I write this with less than a week to live.

Strangely (or, perhaps, it isn't all that strange), I feel nothing about that. It's comparable I think to what one might feel about going to bed after a quiet day.

And I've had a quiet day.

I decided roughly two months ago that I shall exercise unconventional autonomy over my own existence, and stop existing. I gave myself two months to get some things done, which includes writing this. But also to breathe, see the world without worrying about pretty much anything, go on quiet walks, reread my favorite books. I've never known peace quite like this.

So as I write this now, I don't do it with the same determination that I felt some weeks ago. It's human, to want to be heard, but it's behind me, all that I wanted to talk about, and a part of me would rather not care. But if I'm to be true to myself I must do this, so I shall.

PART A

I started to genuinely love myself for the first time when I was fourteen and I'd learned to perceive irrationality in people's, and the world's, logic behind things. I did not know it by that term, then, and perhaps what I eventually understood to be irrationality is just a variation of dishonesty, which people on ASD are evidently sensitive to. Regardless, it enabled me to see myself and the world through my own (metaphorical) eyes, rather than as whatever I'd been shown or told.

I am certain that most people don't bother looking for it, and if they do, they generally aren't anywhere as obsessed, or thorough, with it as I grew to be. It led me to love books, and decide to be a writer, to the field of humanities, and, overall, to not care to conform, and find my own way instead. Thank (figurative) god for that.

It also caused me to unceasingly pursue obscure but universal patterns in existence. Because if I was on my own, I had to ensure that that price was worth it, every diverging step of the way; I had to ensure that my path held more genuineness than the safer ones I persistently rejected; I had to understand the nuances of the input that I navigated by, and continually update my pieced-together map.

Okay the metaphor has gone far enough.

I'm trying to say that I want to share an important (subjective) realization, whose logic I hope you will be curious enough to examine.

Even when there was no apparent hope (and I don't mean merely in contexts involving me; even when beholding things that have nothing to do with me), I never doubted that there was a potential brilliancy that could be found. (In chess, a brilliancy is a rare move that looks absurd, and therefore is not easy to find, but is greatly advantageous if played. Reality is more complex and less rigid than chess, so, theoretically, "brilliancies" are less rare in occurrence there). I always looked for those, so I never accepted that the superficial indicators of apparent doom are the whole picture; I saw (and not merely believed) that a picture of hopelessness is likely to be inaccurate.

So, despite apparent evidence to the contrary, I do not believe that humanity is doomed to be inherently, predominantly miserable. And I think I've identified…

No. It would appear a wild claim, if I made it now. Allow me to walk you through some things first.

When I first beheld and identified misogyny, I did not understand it, not completely. I *understood* that it was fundamentally about power; at the level of the individual, usually, one, a man, feels the need to exercise control over, and see himself as superior to, another, a woman. It is more complex than that of course, because it is larger than the individual – it's also societal, but at its core, this is what it largely is. But it did not make sense, because it's not normal (it's common, sadly, but not *inherent*) for a human to be so obsessed with power. I saw fear, and insecurity, in that desperate, endless need to have and maintain it, but I did not understand the cause.

When I first beheld, in the context of a non-platonic relationship, a series of shifting behavior which I would later learn are known by the terms idealization, devaluation, discarding and hoovering (don't look them up just yet), I *understood* that there was substantial effort at control, and likely, behind it, fragility. But, again, I did not understand the cause, because it was not a run of the mill insecurity, like that of one who had been betrayed in some significant way; it had to be more profound, for it to so actively manifest, and I could not imagine what that might be.

When I first saw that professional spaces fairly universally operate with a substantial degree of manipulation (with everything from the use of "polished" language and perception management,

to outright charming and brown nosing), I saw that, at the level of the individual, it was a strategy to get what one wants. But I did not understand why the same people who used these could have them used effectively upon them – if everyone knows that it's false, how is it substantially fundamental to how the system operates?

When I saw that (even) people who spiritedly stood up for those who had been and were being done injustice, were, frequently, not great people themselves, in terms of character, I failed to see why there were principles, but not true morality.

When I first properly thought about war, I did not get to the end of the layers of mechanisms at play. I reached *greed*, but *it's* not an inherent quality either, certainly not to the intensity with which it manifests in this case; it had to have an underlying cause. I was similarly unsure of what motivates hoarders of wealth and of power, particularly those who disregard certain boundaries and risk everything they have for something they don't need.

We pause here. Please look up (and don't stop with the first article you read, spend five minutes being curious) narcissism (the psychological disorder), and, particularly, what a child experiences when made into a narcissist (which would tell you the 'why' and the 'how'), before continuing; the character of Narcissus, from mythology, does not accurately and adequately depict the disorder which was named after him, nor does the general understanding of the term.

We resume. (If you skipped the reading assignment you'd likely be lost hereon).

Narcissism is very beneficial to have, to ("vertically") navigate present-day economic order and social hierarchies (and thus those most prominent within these structures tend to see superficial elements as valid because they trust them, and the effort behind them, more than anything genuine, and thus those elements remain fundamental to how the system operates despite being false). And a parent who wants their child to navigate this way, and do it exceptionally well, will likely end up creating a narcissist (or, to be accurate, someone with narcissistic traits; narcissism, like a lot of things, can be a spectrum). I've particularly observed this in people of privileged (social and/or economic) classes. As a parent, you influence your child to care about superficiality (status symbols) and power in every context, and to never find anything enough because that's what it seemingly takes to set oneself apart and above the rest, and more than through example – through conditional love, that can be overwhelming or altogether absent, and

other means of potent psychological control, because it's of high priority to ensure that the position of privilege is preserved (and on a related note, misogyny prevails when men are similarly pushed to maintain their position of privilege). Narcissism, thus, is effectively inherited, and tends to be passed on indefinitely.

Incidentally, I was meant to be influenced this way. It however tends to be ineffective on someone who innately and acutely perceives inconsistencies, and is incapable of trusting the source thereafter.

So, one of two things is likely the case here: either I see elements of narcissism in everything that is problematic on account of my experiences, and I see more than there is, or I've spotted something obscure but widespread and significant, again largely on account of my experiences, and I see no more than there is.

I'll now plainly state my arguably wild observation: Narcissism is the greatest persistent factor at the core of nearly all of humanity's major problematic phenomena. Not outdated evolutionary instincts (fear of the unfamiliar, for instance, does not sufficiently explain the extent of hate; someone who is predisposed to need external validation to avoid shame, seeking power, equipped with effective ways of manipulating people, including by capitalizing on that aforementioned fear, wanting to have people who follow them, however, begins to), not ignorance (ignorance, though it holds great potential for harm, again in itself is not so destructive; it manifests as cruelty usually only when the catalyst of entitlement is present, or the craving for narcissistic supply), and not whatever unideal structures the past has left for the present (their original emergence or solidification, and resilience, have an underlying cause).

Perhaps I'm onto something, perhaps I'm not. I wanted to shout this from the rooftops to humanity, regardless. And also:

If this is the apparently hopeless picture – humanity infested with elements of narcissism, with narcissists concentrated around nodes of prominence – the "brilliancy" I identified is this.

A trait of narcissists is the inability to truly look inward, and, outwardly, they tend to always have on a facade – perhaps different ones to suit different situations, but almost always a perfect mask, to appear charming, intimidating, or in some other way impressive, or alternatively, vulnerable, or anxious, to draw a specific emotional response. This is owing to their

predisposition to perceive certain kinds of imperfections (usually anything that suggests mediocrity) on their part as a threat to their image of the grandiose self, which is a defense that keeps excruciating shame at bay.

This is thus arguably a tad cruel to narcissists, but.

When it's out there, knowledge pertaining to the unfortunate origin of a narcissist's disorder, and of the drive behind the facade, to be identified as a narcissist would likely trigger the aforementioned shame, because a perception-managing self sees itself as others see it, and, in this case, it could not bear to see, in that image, anything resembling its true, imperfect self.

"But lack of awareness is the problem with a *lot* of issues," you say? Well in this case there's no need for true awareness; it doesn't require anything cognitively demanding, like in the matter of undoing a person's prejudice. It requires merely letting narcissists know that they could be seen for who they truly are. Everything else thereafter is largely sub- and unconscious, and therefore essentially automatic.

Personally, I've let narcissists know that *I know*, a handful of times in my life (without ever using the term narcissism, of course; as stated earlier, the common understanding of it tends to be inaccurate). The precise nature of their immediate response has varied, but a common element has been that they established distance thereafter. Even bullies. *Especially* bullies.

So I wonder where they would go if there was effectively nowhere to run to.

And I bloody wonder what that world would look like.

PART B

That is really all that I needed to say. It's my attempt at paying back humanity (thank you, for art, and for your kindness). In my delusion it's a brilliant formula for world peace (*I consent to the unaltered sharing of this, or a specific subset of this – Part A, with whomever*).

But I suppose I also owe you an explanation, especially if you knew me.

In an email to jo@samaritans.org, on Apr 5, 2025, 10:01 PM, I wrote:

*"Since sixteen, the concept of suicide, to me, has always... held beauty. During times other than those in which I know excitement (usually, those are weeks when I am able to write (I find myself incapable of writing (fiction) most of the time, but when that randomly and inexplicably changes, I end up obsessively writing a novel in a few blissful weeks)), when my reality is that I experience anxiety for a significant portion of my day, the concept of suicide, whenever I've beheld it, has excited me, the same way one might find the prospect of going on an early morning hike for the first time exciting."*

*"Life has but one objective: to continue to exist. Thus we have evolution, where organisms evolved to feel pain so they can avoid danger and survive long enough to pass on copies of their genes. Life, thus, is fundamentally not about the individual. I find that problematic, as, well, an individual. Talking about things being "problematic" hardly ever gets anywhere, because talking about justice is a sport with fans belonging to both teams, so I'll use another term: it's irrational.*

*"Given all of this, when I look at statistics that say autistic people and queer people are more likely to kill themselves, I do not feel… pity, that I belong to those categories and I am considering suicide, so I would be yet another tragedy, do not feel that I... ought to find the strength to resist for those like me. When I look at the statistics, I find them logical. Rational. At the level of the individuals involved."*

I refer more to autistic than to queer existence (and resent neither).

When everything's more real to you than for most, all the time, the noise of the world is worth it sometimes, to experience the brilliant things that existence occasionally offers, but you mostly really just want shelter from it.

That shelter cannot flicker or threaten to fade.

That's the determiner for my carrying this out now specifically.

*"I know that I am rare, that I am a good person and that I could be the change that I want to see, as I've tried to be these past few years. I know that if I survive some major changes that this phase of my life would bring, I would likely once again find (rudimentary) security, a routine that I would be comfortable with, and new sources of excitement and meaning.*

*“But. I don't want to play the game. I like being clever, I like thinking outside the box. My free trial ends, and I ought to pay a small price to continue playing, I ought to use my acquired xp and skills to continue to survive as the game gets harder, to seek greater symbolic rewards and more powerful abilities. I ought to be hooked, enough that I overlook – hardly ever consider, even – that the game in actuality makes me miserable.*

*“I could keep playing to try to win, whatever that means. I could view stopping playing as admitting defeat. But I think I shan't, and I don't. There's something else I'd rather be doing, than playing the irrational game that I don't remember choosing in the first place.* Anything *else. Even if that “anything” here is actually* nothing *(I don't believe in afterlife or reincarnation; I think humans couldn't accept that their lives don't have a grander purpose or story, so they came up with some of their own).*

*“I know that society views suicide as something horrible (it admittedly* is*, but I reckon it's its causes that ought to be looked at as horrible and they're predominantly not), that I am not going to have a lot of people on my side here, as I hold up this mad logic, that I will be* alone *in this... (that on some level is poetically ironic, and that's beautiful). But hey, I've never sought societal approval.*

*“If you choose to respond, I imagine your protocol involves attempting to make me feel appreciated, so perhaps you'd pick up on the fact that I like the fact that I am (or believe that I am) intelligent, and that I am a writer, and perhaps state something about my language being well structured. Perhaps you'd point to my point that if I survived some scary changes I'd likely be alright, and try to convince me that I ought to wait to see how I feel then. If that is your protocol (and if it's not don't I look stupid), I might have made this trickier for you, by discouraging following your usual approach. (Comes with studying literature I'm afraid, if you're doing it right you want to challenge conventional ways at every turn). I... apologize. Like I said at the start of this letter, I just wanted to express my logic in this matter. I am aware that you in a million years would not (or perhaps more accurately,* could not*) agree with it, I don't... know what I expect in response to this, I don't know if I even expect a response.*

*“Thanks for taking the time to read this, if you've reached this far.*

*Sincerely,*

*Phoenix.”*